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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, October 5, 1999

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE c111The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 5, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HEATHER WILSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

CONGRESS SHOULD HELP FLOOD-RAVAGED NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I represent the Third District of North Carolina that sustained unprecedented damage from Hurricane Floyd. I believe I echo the feelings of my North Carolina colleagues in Congress who also represent storm-damaged areas when I say that the amount of devastation that we have witnessed is almost impossible to comprehend.

While the storm itself has passed, the flooding has wreaked havoc on homes, farms, businesses, and entire communities. Some families lost their homes,

jobs, and vehicles; and they are financially and emotionally stressed and shattered.

Many of our rivers did not fully crest until days after Floyd hit and the additional rainfall last week only added to the problem.

But despite the amount of devastation that surrounds the citizens of eastern North Carolina, everyone is working together in a spirit that reminds us of the strength of this great Nation.

I want to thank the individuals, communities, businesses and organizations in North Carolina and across the country that have stepped up to the plate to help the citizens of eastern North Carolina. It has been a tremendous encouragement to our people.

Madam Speaker, just let me list some of the companies that are assisting: BlueCross/BlueShield of North Carolina, Food Lion, Lucent Technologies, Glaxo Wellcome, International Paper, AJT and Associates of Florida, Mt. Olive Pickle Company, Sara Lee, Winn Dixie, Anheuser-Busch.

These and many other companies have sent help to eastern North Carolina. The charitable agencies and relief organizations have also been wonderful. The Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern North Carolina collected more than 100,000 pounds of food in one week. AmeriCares donated cleaning supplies. The Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the United Way are also coordinating donations of clothing and food drives. Religious communities across the country are also donating time as well as money to help their brothers and sisters across our district and the country.

All branches of the armed services, especially the United States Coast Guard and the United States Marines, Air National Guard, Army National Guard, and Air Force were tireless with their time and resources rescuing residents stranded by flooding. Their dedication to the State and Nation is second to none, and their efforts have been critical in saving and protecting human life.

Madam Speaker, now Congress must do its part. This Congress has an obligation to help the American people first when they are in trouble. We have a moral contract with the taxpayers. Madam Speaker, every year we send money to countless countries across the globe in foreign aid and we know through a variety of sources and reports sometimes billions of these dollars never reach the people they were sent to help. Billions of dollars in U.S. aid to Russia has reportedly been laundered through foreign banks including possible IMF funds. Now the President has pledged to forgive the debt of 36 countries owed to the United States in order to help these countries finance basic human needs. To forgive this debt would cost the American taxpayer \$5 billion.

I would say to the President, there are families in North Carolina who have lost everything. They are living in shelters dependent upon the goodwill of friends and neighbors to provide them with the most basic human needs. Imagine what the community of eastern North Carolina could do with even \$1 billion to help rebuild and repair the devastation.

Now Congress has appropriated over \$12 billion in foreign aid for fiscal year 2000. Madam Speaker, I understand that we have strategic obligations to allies in the Middle East such as Israel; however, I cannot justify voting for a foreign aid package when families in my district are hurting so badly. Madam Speaker, we must help the American taxpayer first. I will not break faith with our own American citizens in their time of need. Not one dime of foreign aid should be appropriated until we take care of the people of our United States of America.

Madam Speaker, if this sounds like "America first," so be it. The people in flood-ravaged eastern North Carolina need our help now, not next year. They are striving to exist each and every day. I call on the leadership of both parties to work together in a bipartisan effort to bring much-needed relief to these families in eastern North Carolina immediately.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.